

US says preparing to ease high-tech export controls

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US Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke gestures while speaking at a business luncheon in Beijing. The US may soon ease restrictions on some high-tech exports to China, Locke said -- a move that Beijing has demanded for years.

The United States may soon ease restrictions on some high-tech exports to China, US Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said Friday -- a move that Beijing has demanded for years.

US President [Barack Obama](#) last year ordered a full review of Washington's export-control regime and hopes the process will be completed in the next few months, he told reporters ahead of key Sino-US economic talks next week.

"With respect to export control reform (regarding China and other countries)... we want to have that done by this summer," Locke said as he pursued a trade mission to China focused on clean-energy

cooperation.

"Some of it can be implemented almost immediately, maybe some... can be done in a matter of months once there is agreement within the administration on the review."

In 1989 the US implemented a series of export controls on sensitive high technology to China, following Beijing's brutal crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen democracy protests.

At the same time, Europe has also implemented an arms embargo on China.

Since then, Beijing has loudly campaigned for the lifting of both measures.

Earlier this week, Chinese commerce ministry spokesman Yao Jian said he hoped China would not be excluded in Washington's policy overhaul.

"We hope the United States will treat all countries equally and not discriminate against China in the reform of its export-control system," Yao said.

Beijing has long cited the export controls for contributing to China's huge trade surplus with the [United States](#), which reached 226.8 billion dollars last year.

Locke said restrictions would be lifted on some commonly available high-tech goods -- and strengthened on sensitive technologies with military uses.

"We need to intensify and increase our protection on some very super-sensitive technologies to make sure that they don't get in the hands of

those who want to do America... harm, especially terrorist organisations," he said.

"At the same time we have restrictions on items already readily available from companies around the rest of the world and our restrictions make no sense."

The export of some sensitive goods may still need US Congressional approval, while others could be exported following an executive order or even via simple administrative rules, he added.

"There are thousands of items on the (export-control) list," he said.

Locke was in Beijing leading the first cabinet-level US trade mission since Obama announced an ambitious target in March to double US exports within five years to promote job growth.

He will join US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and other cabinet officials next week for key talks with China, at which trade and other economic concerns are to be addressed.

Locke also reiterated in a speech to US businessmen that the US will press [China](#) to revise its so-called "indigenous innovation" policies, which Washington says limit foreign firms' access to Chinese markets.

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